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METZENBAUM URGES DEMOCRATS TO CAMPAIGN ON ETHICS

BY STEVE GERSTEL

Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, wants Democrats to use the administration's "unprecedented record of illegal and ethical misconduct" in the 1984 election campaign against President Reagan and other Republicans.

Metzenbaum said 41 administration officials have been "implicated in conflicts of interest, illegal activity, misuse of government funds or other ethical misconduct."

Among those fingered by Metzenbaum were retiring Attorney General William French Smith, CIA Director William Casey, Navy Secretary John Lehman, White House deputy chief of staff Michael Deaver, Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan and U.S. Information Agency Director Charles Wick.

"I believe that the widespread and frankly scandalous unethical or illegal conduct by top officials of this administration is an explosive issue," Metzenbaum said in a letter to Democratic colleagues.

"It can and should be responsibly used to our party's advantage in the upcoming presidential and Senate campaign."

Sen. Gary Hart of Colorado, campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination, has already attacked the administration on the same grounds.

Metzenbaum, citing cases in the Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon and Carter eras, said, "In past administrations, instances of improper conduct have been quickly and sharply denounced. But this administration, which has an unmatched record of illegal and ethical misconduct, has managed to escape the criticism of the

"We should not permit the president to avoid the issue over the next few months. We can and should shine a bright spotlight on the unprecedented degree of illegal and unethical activity by his appointees."

Of the 41 listed by Metzenbaum, he said 22 have been implicated in conflicts of interest, seven have allegedly misused government funds or personnel and three have engaged in illegal inside trading.

"Nine others have been implicated in activities ranging from bribery to perjury to illegal wiretapping," Metzenbaum said.

Among those named by Metzenbaum:

-Smith for claiming excessive tax deductions from tax shelter investment and receiving \$50,000 severance pay from his former company after he joined the government.

-Casey for refusing to place financial holdings in a blind trust, including investments in firms with CIA business. He has since placed his investments in a blind trust.

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